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Revictimization of Victims Sexually Abused by Women

Abstract: Victims of sexual abuse experience not only physical harm but also, above all, severe psychological traumas which usually accompany them for life. Quite often, when determining the consequences, the perpetrator's gender is downplayed. This is why it is important to investigate the problem of sexual abuse from the perspective of immediate and long-term consequences, when the perpetrator of such deeds was a woman – a mother or guardian. In this article, the secondary-source search method was used to present the problem of the consequences of sexual abuse in victims who experienced such behavior from women. The purpose of this work is to discuss the specificity of the trauma suffered by victims of both genders associated with sexual abuse, as well as the immediate and long-term consequences of these events in the form of primary victimization and revictimization marked in adult life in the form of psychosexual disorders and social deficits. Among the consequences, it is worth paying special attention to the listed traumatic factors of dynamic nature which cause many symptoms characteristic of children who experienced sexual violence. These factors are: traumatic sexualization of the child, betrayal, stigmatization and powerlessness. The uniqueness of these factors is due to the fact that they leave 'distant traces' in the psyche and may be additionally reinforced in a situation where the perpetrator of sexual violence is a woman. This results from frequent attitudes of 'denial' toward sexual violence used by women. Also, the article points to one of the possible consequences of the revictimization process i.e. the victims mimicking, later in their life, the behavior associated with sexual abuse of children. This process, which results from the alternating identification of the perpetrator and the victim, initiates a vicious circle that makes it more difficult to create correct social interactions.

Key words: Sexual abuse, dynamic traumatic factors, primary and secondary victimization, revictimization, transgenerational nature of violence patterns.

Introduction

The issue of sexual abuse, viewed from the perspective of the victim, is very complex. Apart from the obvious difficulty of reaching the victims and obtaining information from them in a way that would not deepen the experienced trauma and thereby contribute to revictimization, a significant obstacle may be constituted by the nature of deeds done by the perpetrator which are not always unequivocally identified by the victim as a form of sexual violence. Above all, this applies to the victims of sexual abuse by women. This case often presents difficulties pertaining to the form of the abuse itself. With regard to female perpetrators of sexual abuse, there arises the dilemma of differentiating between behavior resulting from care functions and behavior crossing the line of caring. This poses difficulties in defining women's behavior that bears signs of sexual abuse. Among others, Henry Ford, when describing sexual behavior that falls into the category of sexual violence, suggests that they do not necessarily have to be defined in such terms. Instances of such behavior include, for example, voyeurism, undressing in front of the child, touching the victim seductively, kissing and hugging of sexual nature, violating the child's privacy during physiological activities, joint baths with the child or washing the child even though it could be doing it unaided, asking persistent questions about physiological activities or excessively focusing on washing the child's genitals. This kind of behavior, which oversteps the boundaries of the child's intimacy, may, however, be interpreted by the child and by the environment as acceptable, given the special role that is played by the woman i.e. guardian or mother to the child. The described instances of behavior may suggest abnormal relations between the adult perpetrator and the child, which turn the child into a substitute for an absent partner not only in the sexual sphere but also in the emotional sphere because, to the perpetrator, the child usually becomes a confidant of her emotional and sexual problems (cf. Ford 2006).

The problem tackled in this article – revictimization of the victims of sexual abuse by women – takes on special importance not only in light of the difficulties in recognition and unequivocal determination of the nature of actions taken by the perpetrators, but also in the scope of the possibility of compensation for harm done to victims, or even restoration of a sense of justice. Usually, women, who committed sexual violence on children, are treated as 'people with mental disorders' in whose case undergoing treatment would be the most reasonable measure. This approach is mainly due to the fact that the role of a 'sexual attacker' is associated primarily with men. A man performs the role of the person initiating a sexual act and controlling its course. A woman, on the other hand, is perceived as passive, withdrawn, consenting, unable to cause harm. Paradoxically, such pattern applies also to a situation where the male is a child and the female

– an adult offender. And when the sexually abusive woman's victim is a girl, the environment tends to seek explanation of such behavior as peculiarly understood love and care for the child (Saradjian 2010, p.13). As a result, women implicated in sexual violence toward a child are usually treated as accessories who were forced by men to behave like this. Therefore, they are treated as victims on a par with the harmed child (cf. Denov 2004). For these reasons, not only do victims experience immediate consequences identified with primary victimization, but also long-term ones that can disturb the way they function in many areas. These consequences destabilize the social, emotional and sexual areas of the individual's life. Still, symptoms of the disorders may manifest themselves many years later, sort of 'spontaneously', without the direct influence of a traumatic factor. Said consequences may be described as revictimization i.e. recurring effects of sexual violence experienced in one's childhood.

Objectives and method

I wish to present the issue of revictimization of victims sexually abused by women based on theoretical and empirical studies pertaining to this concept. Analysis of the undertaken problem shall consist in the following (based on literature):

1. Discussion of the specificity of the trauma experienced as a result of sexual abuse, taking into account the gender of the victims.
2. Characteristics of the consequences of experienced sexual abuse that are manifested in primary victimization.
3. Discussion of the consequences of the victimization process manifested in the form of psychosexual disorders and social deficits in victims, namely, symptoms of revictimization.
4. Indication of the possible consequences of revictimization connected with mimicking, in adult life, of behavioral patterns associated with child molesting.

As already mentioned, the work has a theoretical nature. Therefore, analysis of literature (secondary sources) is the applied method.

The victims' gender vs. nature of the experienced trauma

The nature and severity of harm suffered by the victims depends on many factors i.a. the traits of the victim and perpetrator as well as the characteristics of the event itself. Most of the available texts suggest that the perpetrators of sexual abuse are usually men. This does not, however, mean that the practices of women in this scope can be marginalized. Gender of the perpetrators may determine not only the gender of the potential victims, but also the nature of the entire incident.

Comparative research conducted, among others, by Jacqui Saradjian suggests that those who more often fall victim to sexual violence by women are boys. Having conducted research on perpetrators and victims of sexual abuse, Saradjian concluded that there is a connection between the chosen gender of the underage victim and the sexual orientation of the perpetrator. Women, who committed acts of violence toward male adolescents, chose their victims in accordance with the women's sexual orientation. On the other hand, the perpetrators, whose victims were very young children, indicated that the child's gender did not matter to them because, to them, it was more important to be with the child itself, regardless of its gender (cf. Saradjian 1996). This may suggest that these perpetrators display symptoms of pedophilic tendencies of fixational nature i.e. ones characterized by concentration on the child as the most attractive sexual 'object'. Although women are much less frequently diagnosed with pedophilia (in comparison with men), this obviously does not rule out the possibility of deviant sexual fantasies of pedophilic nature or sexual arousal induced by this matter in female perpetrators of sexual violence. Chow and Choy describe clinical cases of women diagnosed with pedophilia. They confirm that the surveyed women displayed sexual interest in children for a long time, masturbated while fantasizing about children, and exhibited specific sexual preference for children 3–4 years of age (Chow, Choy 2002, pp. 211–215). In turn, Mathews, Matthews and Speltz concluded that the women they surveyed experienced sexual arousal while committing an act of violence but, interestingly, this arousal was reduced by the notion that their victims were adult partners (cf. Mathews et al. 1989). After conducting a study on underage perpetrators of sexual violence, Hunter, Lexier, Goodwin, Browne et al. concluded that 6 girls out of 10 covered by the therapeutic program declared that they sometimes had deviant sexual fantasies about children before they committed the first sexual assault, and 2 of them admitted to practicing masturbation during which they fantasized about much younger children (Hunter et al. 1993, pp. 317–326).

Going back to Saradjian's findings, it is also worth emphasizing the significant difference between female and male victim populations. Research results suggest that for boys, who fell victim to sexual violence by women, this is a less stigmatizing experience than for girls. This can mean that girls are reluctant to disclose such events and, therefore, it may be expected that data pertaining to girls sexually abused by women can be underestimated (cf. Saradjian 1996). Here, a very important issue should be pointed out – it concerns the nature of trauma associated with the gender of the perpetrator and the circumstances of the event. In a sense, Saradjian's findings confirm the supposition that, for the victims of sexual abuse, the violence used by men is more traumatizing, primarily because of the role of an attacker that is attributed to a man in contact with a victim. Said passivity of a woman, which does not predestine her to the role of an attacker, as well as the hidden nature of sexual molestation, seemingly translate to a lower level of aggression and thus also lesser trauma experienced by the victims. For these reasons

it is usually suggested that, to some victims, and this applies mostly to boys, sexual abuse by a woman in the role of a perpetrator may have a rewarding nature especially when the victim is an adolescent boy. Not only can such situations be downplayed, but they can also hinder identification of sexual abuse due to the blurring of boundaries between sexual and care/sanitary activities. A sexual molestation act performed on a small child or girl takes on a completely different nature. Although, as already mentioned, in the second case it may be connected with the sexual orientation of the perpetrator.

Research conducted by Johnson and Shrier also suggests that even though children sexually abused by women consider these experiences to be deeply traumatic, only few of them are willing to disclose them (Johnson, Shrier 1987, pp. 650–662). Risen and Koss report that out of the 218 people they surveyed, who experienced sexual violence by women before the age of 14, as many as 81% did not tell anyone about this. Some respondents added that when they tried to reveal these events, specialists (doctors, psychologists), to whom they turned, usually trivialized these situations or simply did not give them credence (Risen, Koss 1987, pp. 309–322). However, it ought to be borne in mind that victims of sexual violence (also by women) struggle not only with shame, a sense of guilt and sometimes fear, but often also with being attributed with full responsibility for what happened. Girls molested by women may abstain from revealing this fact simply because they are afraid of questions regarding their sexual orientation. Adolescent boys, who fell victim to a woman's violence, may, on the one hand, perceive this act as humiliation or emasculation and thus refrain from making such event publicly known, but they may also fear that it is them who will be perceived as the aggressors (according to common stereotypes). Another aspect worth emphasizing is that adolescents may not perceive the experienced acts of violence by women as sexual abuse at all. Often, the reason may be that the perpetrators themselves interpret these experiences as 'signs of love' (cf. Saradjian 1996).

Yet another factor that may make identification of the deed more difficult, or keep the molested child from revealing the experienced violence, is the fact of being related to the perpetrator. As Saradjian's research shows, perpetrators of sexual violence toward children are most often their mothers, stepmothers or women who provide these children with motherly care. In such situations, violence usually starts in early childhood and is concealed under the guise of care. Research carried out by Peter indicates that the perpetrators he surveyed ($N = 34$) committed acts of violence on children starting from infancy. The upper limit was usually the age of 15. In comparison with men, who were perpetrators of the analyzed deeds too, the age of victims of violence by women was much younger (92% of victims of female violence were under 9) (Peter 2009, pp. 1111–1128). These reports present alarming information. Children, who from such an early age experience sexual violence from close people, may later assume that experiences of this sort are 'normal' in relations between a mother and

child. What is more, children depend on motherly care and are uncritical of their mother, which definitely reduces the possibility of disclosure of harmful behavior.

Consequences suffered by victims of sexual abuse – primary and secondary victimization

Although female perpetrators of sexual violence, and the nature of deeds committed thereby, are treated as less significant and harmful, it must be stated that the size and types of consequences suffered by the victim are independent of the perpetrator's gender. There is a widespread conviction that sexual abuse carried out by a woman is less destructive to a child. However, research does not confirm this proposition. For example, Denov surveyed a group of 7 men and 7 women who had been sexually abused. Nearly all of them stated that the fact of being abused by women was particularly traumatic for them and that it was very difficult for them to regain balance. Only one of the men expressed that he did not perceive the fact of being abused by a woman as harming (Denov 2004, pp. 1137–1156). Also Johnson and Shrier found that 73% out of 11 adolescent boys whom they surveyed, who had been sexually molested by women, declared that the immediate consequences of molestation were severe and damaging (Johnson, Shrier 1987, pp. 650–662). Quite surprising, though similar in meaning, may be the findings of Sgroi and Sargent. Having surveyed victims molested by both men and women, they noted that, according to the victims, sexual violence by women was more traumatic and harmful than the deeds perpetrated by men (Sgroi, Sargent 1993, pp. 15–38). Regardless of the kind of crime committed, the behavior of women can be as cruel as that of men. This applies also to sexual abuse. Salter provides an example list of objects that sexually molested children had placed in their vaginas or anuses by female perpetrators (Salter 2005, p. 101). When analyzing the doings of these perpetrators (the listed objects included, among others, various fruits, hair rollers, hairbrushes, knives and scissors), one cannot help but think that their behavior also had sadistic traits and was aimed at causing pain to the victim and exerting control over him/her.

Sexual violence perpetrated by women is often considered as a distorted form of love. In fact, some perpetrators, when sexually abusing a child, perceive the child as a 'lover'. But for many, sexual victimization of a child is associated with sadistic sexual fantasies. According to Saradjian, as many as 29 out of 52 surveyed offenders (i.e. 55%) admitted that they were more stimulated when they imagined sadistic sexual encounters with a child (cf. Saradjian 1996).

In the opinion of Saradjian, the 'denial mechanism' common in our culture has a significant impact on the gravity of consequences suffered by the victims of sexual violence by women (Saradjian 2010, p. 21). The severity of damage resulting from various forms of applied sexual violence depends (to a lesser ex-

tent) on the actual events and (to a greater extent) on how the underage victim perceives and evaluates this. Finkelhor and Browne described four dynamizing, traumatic factors that cause many symptoms characteristic of children who experienced sexual violence (Finkelhor, Browne 1985, pp. 530–541). These factors are: traumatic sexualization of the child, betrayal, stigmatization and powerlessness. These factors, which appear in the context of a child sexually abused by a woman, can be reinforced by attitudes of ‘denial’ toward sexual violence used by women.

Traumatic sexualization of the child

Traumatic sexualization includes aversive feelings associated with sexual contacts, overestimation of sex (paying too much attention to sex), embarrassment felt in connection with sexual contacts and conversations about this subject, and problems with sexual identification. For victims of sexual violence perpetrated by women, the trauma can be worse because harmful behavior from women is shocking for the victims. Women are usually perceived from the perspective of caring and educative roles. Abuse in performance of these traditional roles therefore constitutes a gross dissonance. It makes the victims more susceptible to harm in the sexual sphere and may also cause tendencies toward sexual promiscuity in the future. On the other hand, victims (most often women), who are regarded as asexual, may believe that they are condemned to the role of a victim, and this belief causes such untypical behavior in them (Saradjian 2010, p. 21). In this context, it ought to be noted that the victims may strengthen the conviction that it was them who provoked the attack thus reinforcing fear of interpersonal contacts and establishing close sexual or emotional relations. Often, victims have problems also with sexual identification. Dimock surveyed 7 men who, as children, experienced sexual violence from women (in four cases those were the mothers, in the other three – the sisters). In adult life, all the surveyed men exhibited compulsive sexual behavior, sexual identification disorders and problems in establishing interpersonal relations (Dimock 1998, pp. 203–221). Similar observations are made by Zbigniew Lew-Starowicz who points out that in many sexually molested men, there have appeared problems with clearly defining sexual orientation, sexual phobias and problems with attitudes toward their own bodies (cf. Lew-Starowicz 1992).

Said problems may also result from defense mechanisms that were consolidated in childhood i.a. dissociation. The dissociative mechanism effectively separates the sense of reality from the victim’s own body thus preventing access to any sensations (pain, suffering) during an act of sexual abuse. However, once it has been consolidated, it isolates adult victims of sexual abuse from any pleasure to be experienced in the sensual sphere because any form of sexual stimulation triggers a defensive reaction.

Stigmatization

Sexual victimization leaves the victims with a sense of guilt, shame and fear of getting harmed in interpersonal relations. These feelings may lead to withdrawal from interpersonal relations and alienation. Another result can be self-destructive behavior such as suicidal gestures and attempts, self-inflicted injury, sexual promiscuity or other instances of behavior that are supposed to consciously lead to punishment. The status of a victim of sexual abuse by a woman, in a society that treats such deeds as extremely unusual, is a kind of mark as well as a source of shame and guilt. Stigmatization, isolation and alienation of child victims of sexual abuse by women make them more vulnerable to harm. Women, who sexually abuse children, have a tendency to malign and harass the victims. The result of such negative projection from the perpetrator is a low self-esteem and a sense of being flawed, often reflected in statements such as: "I'm an accident". "I see nothing valuable in me. I've never done anything properly" (Saradjian 1996, p. 6).

It should, however, be noted that, in the period of adolescence, many sexually abused boys are perceived in their environment from a quite different perspective. They are treated as 'lucky' ones who underwent initiation, a kind of 'rite of passage'. Under the influence of these convictions, some adolescent boys see the act of abuse as harmless or even, in a sense, positively tinged. Kell (et al.) investigated the relationship between positive feelings associated with sexual abuse and their psychosocial function in adult life. They stated that the respondents who declare positive or mixed feelings about an act of sexual abuse exhibit more adaptive problems than men who clearly describe their feelings as negative. The researchers concluded that declared positive feelings associated with violence are the reason why these victims should be classified as belonging to the group at high risk of social ill-adaptation. They exhibit a higher risk of sexual disorders, tendencies toward violence and self-inflicted injury. The highest risk of said threats concerns individuals who declared that, before they were 16 years old, they had sexual encounters with much older people completely voluntarily. The authors also concluded that the surveyed men in their youth, i.e. before the age of 16, more often treated sexual activity with mature women as their will, as opposed to similar contacts with men, which they deemed to be an act of violence and abuse (Kelly et al. 2002, pp. 425–441).

Betrayal

Sexual abuse of a child always bears the signs of betrayed trust in mutual relations between the perpetrator and the victim. It takes on a special significance when the perpetrator is a woman, who should care for the child and protect it. The most dramatically felt betrayal is associated with a situation where the per-

petrator of violence is the mother (Saradjian 2010, p. 23). In the child, the sense of guilt causes anger and disbelief that the victim's boundary of intimacy has been overstepped, which may manifest themselves in various forms of behavior, without precluding mental, physical and sexual violence. Some of the victims get addicted to particular categories of people who are also prone to use violence. Another response to betrayal may be manipulating others, entering into destructive relationships later in life, or being unable to trust other people (Saradjian 2010, pp. 23–24).

In the field of victimology, there is a known concept of latent victims i.e. people who are repeatedly prone to be a victim. This largely applies also to victims of sexual abuse (also by women). In adult life, such people, more often than others, enter into destructive relationships and are subject to further acts of physical and sexual violence. Women much more often become the victims of rape or attempted rape by their partners or strangers. One could assume that this is due to the problems associated with entering into relationships with improper partners whom they usually choose based on anticipation of behavioral patterns. Such victims usually have problems with establishing safe boundaries in the relationship, which makes self-protection more difficult for them.

Powerlessness

When a child experiences sexual victimization on the part of a woman, it has a strong sense of powerlessness and helplessness especially when the aggressor is its mother. In such case, the victim's entire life is controlled by the perpetrator. The feeling of powerlessness results in greater susceptibility to harm. At the same time, the child feels the need to regain control over its own life. This leads to identification with the aggressor and increases the likelihood that, in adult life, the victim will strive for control over others, exploitation of others and use of violence. Many authors suggest that men who, as children, fell victim to sexual violence by women, in adult life are prone to use sexual violence toward others (Margolis 1984, pp. 355–385 and Rosencrans 1997). While conducting a study on rapists, Groth noticed that, among those who were subjected to sexual victimization in childhood, there were more victims of abuse by women than by men which, according to him, explains the tendency to later commit sexual assaults on women (Groth 1979, pp. 10–16). He points out that most of the rapists had traumatic sexual experiences in childhood, causing the need to exert complete control over the victim during a sexual encounter. Total enslavement and subordination of the victim are a source of sexual satisfaction for them.

The victims, in turn, can use various defense mechanisms in the form of avoidance, self-containment, dissociation or escape. When it is impossible to avoid negative emotions due to ineffectiveness of defense mechanisms, the victims may experience fears, phobias, sleeplessness as well as eating problems and obses-

sive-compulsive behavior (Saradjian 2010, p. 25). In extreme cases, where the child's sexual abuse by the mother has lasted a longer period of time, the child cannot physically leave the field of this traumatic interaction, and so it 'escapes' mentally, which entails inhibition or slowing down of the cognitive and social spheres as well as behavioral disorders.

One should also add identification with the perpetrator to the discussed factors connected with traumatic experiences that contribute to the victim's revictimization. Not only can this mechanism affect the victims' personal problems, but also contribute to the copying of sexual behavior models at later stages of their lives.

Identification

Cole and Putnam (1992) suggest that there is a relationship between the trauma associated with sexual abuse of a child and the child's stage of development at which the sexual assault was committed. According to said authors, the period in which sexual abuse happened will, to a varying degree, influence formation of the child's identity. Thus, the younger the child who experiences violence is and the more it depends on the perpetrator, the more destructively these deeds influence development of its identity. The authors compared child victims of female violence who were generally younger (the average age was 5.84) with victims of male violence (the average age was 8.54). Victims of women, especially when the perpetrator is the mother, must cope with the toxic proximity and relations created by the perpetrator, and face difficulties in forming their own identity. This can entail disorders of sexual identification (Cole, Putnam 1992, pp. 174–184).

Revictimization as a factor conducive to the alternating identification of the victim and perpetrator

One of the more important implications of revictimization, which ought to be taken into account when analyzing the consequences of sexual abuse in childhood, is the possibility of assuming the role of a perpetrator in the next episode of life. The alternating nature of identification, connected with the exchange of the social roles of a victim and perpetrator, may also be explained with the transgenerational phenomenon of passing down models of violence. This mechanism operates based on modeling and mimicking violent behavior when faced with a lack of constructive anger reduction models and with the need to repeat traumatic experiences in order to give them sense and to integrate them with previous experiences, under the influence of educational conditions in the family that form the identity (Kubacka-Jasiecka 2004, p. 209).

The significant frequency of violent experiences among female perpetrators of child abuse is indicated, among others, by Saradjian, who suggests that this problem concerned from 50 to 80% of female perpetrators (cf. Saradjian 1996). When analyzing the process of victimization of the female perpetrators, one must also consider the fact that they experienced particularly drastic and cruel acts that caused great suffering. The nature of these experiences influenced their psyche in a special way. Many women, who were subjected to sexual violence in childhood, exhibit symptoms of chronic trauma as well as cognitive, emotional and behavioral disorders that manifest themselves in adult life. They display symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which may be caused by a traumatic event of exceptionally high intensity exceeding the capabilities of defense mechanisms. What is more, links are pointed out between sexual abuse and sleeping/eating disorders in adulthood. Of course, this basis cannot lead to a conclusion that manifestation of disorders of this kind is rooted in earlier traumatic sexual experiences. One may conclude, however, that for women, who committed sexual abuse on children and who exhibit the symptoms of cognitive, emotional or even mental disorders, the traumatic experiences from childhood could have been the factor driving them to violence. Obviously, being sexually molested in childhood, and the related process of victimization, will not in every case be connected with the change in roles from a victim to perpetrator. Many of these women never assume the role of a sexual abuser. It should rather be concluded that the following might be deemed to be the factors linked to later acts of sexual violence: specific kind of victimizing experiences of sexual abuse, type of behavior displayed by people from the environment in which such event happened where said behavior led to mental and social ill-adaptation, the later reaching for psychoactive substances and entering into dysfunctional relationships reflecting relations with the perpetrator (Eldridge, Saradjian 2000, pp. 402–426).

Women who perpetrate sexual child molestation are essentially different from male perpetrators. Source literature differentiates female perpetrators by various criteria i.a. motivation (sexual or non-sexual) for the deed and type of relation with the victim. Beech et al. described two groups of female perpetrators taking into account the motives of behavior associated with sexual acts performed on children. The first one are women whose motivation may (but does not have to) consist in getting sexual gratification and who are afraid to use violence toward the victim (they are often forced to behave like this by a man/co-perpetrator who uses violence toward both the victim and woman). The second group are female perpetrators who do not exhibit any reservations about the use of violence, and whose only acting motivation is getting sexual gratification (Beech et al. 2009, pp. 201–216).

Since the female child abusers' sexual stimulation and the desire to gain sexual satisfaction most likely play a certain role in their behavior, it is important to establish whether deviant sexual preferences will motivate to violent behavior

toward children. Therefore, it may be stated that deviant sexual stimulation will have significance in the case of women acting on their own (alone) or women molesting adolescents i.e. women who choose victims according to their sexual preferences and who see them as a substitute for a mature partner (Gannon et al. 2008, pp. 352–374).

Among others, Saradjian indicates several types of female perpetrators, out of which three may be considered to be the most characteristic (Saradjian 1996, p. 36). The first one is women who commit incestuous acts the victims of which are usually younger children – 6 years of age or less. In these women, apart from any possible paraphiliac tendencies that were mentioned above, one can also notice symptoms of toxic relations with the child, characterized by interpenetration of caregiving activities and sexual activities disguised as care. Deeds of this kind, which sometimes are not clear to see, can result from experiences associated with being sexually abused in childhood. Women who were sexually molested by a parent (e.g. mother) may identify love with sexuality. When this is the case, sexual contact with the child becomes a sign of love especially when this argument was resorted to in the parent's behavior. Another category may be women who perceive their sexual activity toward a child as a kind of initiative 'mission' i.e. one that initiates the victim into the mysteries of sexuality. They engage in sexual activity toward male adolescents, and this sexual activity is supposed to help both the perpetrator and victim get sexual satisfaction. Female perpetrators of this category tend to burden the victims with responsibility for initiating sexual encounters. The last group is women who may be called accomplices of men, because they were forced by their partners to have sexual intercourses with the child. Most often, they do this due to their fear of being abandoned, or in order to give the partner pleasure (Saradjian 1996, p. 36). It can also be linked with the women's earlier experiences who, as already mentioned, have problems with establishing safe boundaries in the relationship because their objective is to live with a man who provides them with supposed care. These women usually idealize the partner which makes it difficult or even impossible for them to objectively evaluate the partner, his intentions and actions. As Saradjian writes, after some time, these female perpetrators may find contentment in sexual encounters with children to a point where they start molesting them on their own initiative (Saradjian 1996, p. 36).

Gannon et al. established categories of female perpetrators for whom the main purpose of sexual contacts with children was to experience the closeness and warmth in relation with the victim or even with the co-perpetrator (Gannon et al. 2008, pp. 352–374). Different conclusions may be reached if one is led by the findings of Rusell and Oswald who stated that women who force sexual behavior in children preferred the so-called 'ludic sexual behavior' associated with a playful approach, devoid of sensual involvement but rather aiming to manipulate the victim and to have control over him/her which, in fact, was a source of

pleasure (Rusell, Oswald 2001, pp. 103–115). Similar propositions are put forward by Saradjian. The women he surveyed also noted that the most frequently felt emotions during sexual encounters with children were connected with pleasure derived from a sense of power and control (cf. Saradjian 1996).

According to Gannon, women who perpetrate sexual molestation compensate for their negative experiences in relationships by playing a dominant role in violence-based relations, which is aided by many factors i.a. social isolation, inadequate defense mechanisms or emotional issues. Moreover, negative experiences of the women and their expectations about creation of satisfying relationships make them susceptible to harm and abuse by men who force them to assist in sexual molestation of children (Gannon et al. 2008, pp. 353–374).

Conclusion

The discussed problem of revictimization of sexual violence victims requires in-depth research primarily because of the potential consequences that cannot always be reduced by therapeutic interventions. The retrospective effects that result from fending off traumatic experiences may cause anxieties and personality disorders limiting the individual's activity in various areas. The transgenerational nature of violent behavior models should not be excluded either because, as demonstrated in this article, it can constitute a real threat stemming from past experiences associated with being sexually abused by women. The extent of consequences which definitely affect the victim's future life suggests that it is necessary to develop individualized therapeutic actions focused on both the size and specificity of the experienced trauma, which takes the victim's gender into account.

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